

Good afternoon Committee Chair Matthew Hall and Tax Policy Committee Members,

My name is Ashley Rapp, and I am a lifelong Michigan resident, community activist, and epidemiologist based in Detroit, Michigan. Today I am pleased to voice my support for Michigan House Bills 5267 and 4270. When I first testified before this committee, it was October of 2019. The late Rep. Isaac Robinson sat where you are sitting now, and I remember fondly the support he showed for the cause and for each of my colleagues that testified.

The task at hand today is to think about the women in our lives and what truly is a “necessity” for them. Supplies like toothpaste, deodorant, and toilet paper are each items that a woman relies on to maintain her basic hygiene. These are items she needs to feel clean in her home, at her place of work, and with the people around her. Items she needs so that she isn’t turned away from a job interview or looked at with disgust in the grocery store. The current tax upholds that pads and tampons are intrinsically different from these other products, when in reality, they are just as necessary. The only difference is that these products are only required for the personal hygiene of women.

Let’s join the ranks of states like Oregon, Illinois, Florida, and Connecticut that have effectively ended the tampon tax. Michigan is a state characterized by our work ethic and drive. With your support of these House Bills, we can continue to be trailblazers by making our tax system even more equitable.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you all today. I urge you to support these bills unanimously today.